

May 3, 2019

DOH-PINELLAS IDENTIFIES CASE OF HEPATITIS A IN FOOD SERVICE WORKER; ENCOURAGES VACCINATION



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The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) has identified a positive case of hepatitis A in a food service worker at Arby's Restaurant in north Pinellas, FL. The employee may have exposed patrons between April 5 – 20, 2019.

DOH-Pinellas conducted an epidemiological investigation and today determined the individual who worked at Arby's Restaurant, 30263 US Highway 19 N., Clearwater 33761, between April 5 and 20 may have been infectious.

If you frequented this restaurant during that period and have not previously been vaccinated for hepatitis A, you should consider getting vaccinated. You will receive the first dose of the hepatitis A immunization. The second dose is provided six months after the first. If you have previously received the hepatitis A vaccine you do not need to take additional action.

Hepatitis A vaccine may provide protection against the disease *if given within two weeks after exposure*. Patrons should monitor for symptoms of hepatitis A infection which include sudden onset of abdominal discomfort, dark urine, fever, diarrhea, pale white stools, and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek medical attention promptly.

DOH-Pinellas will open a special hepatitis A vaccination clinic at its Clearwater location, 310 N. Myrtle Ave. Hours today, May 3, until 7 p.m. and tomorrow, Saturday, May 4, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Those with questions about exposure to hepatitis A at Arby's can call 727-824-6932. Messages will be returned within 12 hours.

DOH-Pinellas continues to offer the hepatitis A vaccine at no cost and without an appointment at these clinic locations from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays:

- **St. Petersburg:** 205 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N
- **Pinellas Park:** 6350 76th Ave. N
- **Mid-County (Largo):** 8751 Ulmerton Rd
- **Clearwater:** 310 N. Myrtle Ave
- **Tarpon Springs:** 301 S. Disston Ave

DOH-Pinellas is encouraging all healthcare providers, including hospital emergency departments to stay on high alert and immediately report cases to DOH-Pinellas.

Contact your county's health department for hepatitis A vaccinations if you live outside Pinellas. Vaccination is the best way to prevent hepatitis A. People who should be vaccinated for hepatitis A include:

- All children at the age of 12 months
- People who are experiencing homelessness
- Users of recreational drugs, whether injected or not
- Men who have sexual encounters with other men
- People with direct contact with others who have hepatitis A
- Travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common
- People with chronic or long-term liver disease, including hepatitis B or hepatitis C
- People with clotting-factor disorders
- Family and caregivers of adoptees from countries where hepatitis A is common

What is Hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious disease that attacks the liver. People infected with hepatitis A are most contagious from two weeks before onset of symptoms to one week afterwards. Not everyone who is infected will have all the symptoms. Symptoms usually start within 28 days of exposure to the virus with a range of 15-50 days. Symptoms can include:

- Jaundice (yellowing skin and whites of eyes)
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue/tired
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Dark-colored urine
- Pale or clay colored stool

How is hepatitis A treated or hepatitis A infection prevented?

- **Hepatitis A vaccine is the best method of preventing infection.**
- No medicines can cure the disease once symptoms appear. People with hepatitis A symptoms should seek medical care immediately.
- Most people get better over time but may need to be hospitalized.
- Previous infection with hepatitis A provides immunity for the rest of a person's life.
- People that are exposed to hepatitis A may be given vaccine or immune globulin within 14 days of exposure to prevent infection.

Go to www.PinellasHealth.com or call (727) 824-6900 for information about DOH-Pinellas. Follow us on Twitter @HealthyPinellas.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.